

Message Text

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ORIGIN PM-07

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APPROVED BY PM/ISO:JDSTODDART

NEA/GRK - MR. CHURCHILL

OSD/ISA - CMDR. TALBERT

CNO - ADM. ZUMWALT

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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CONFIRMED

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CINCEUR

FLEET SUPPORT OFFICE ATHENS

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, GR

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ON HOMEPORING

1. ON AFTERNOON OF JULY 19, ADMIRAL ZUMWALT APPEARED
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE OF THE HOUSE FOREIGN
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE. HEARING WAS WELL ATTENDED WITH TWELVE
MEMBERS PRESENT AND LASTED APPROXIMATELY THREE HOURS.
ADMIRAL ZUMWALT BEGAN BY HIGHLIGHTING PRINCIPLE POINTS OF
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HIS PREPARED STATEMENT. HE SAID HOMEPORING IS ABSOLUTELY
VITAL IF WE ARE TO MAINTAIN AN ALL VOLUNTEER FORCE AND
SUPPORT OUR NAVAL COMMITMENTS WORLDWIDE. WITHOUT HOME-
PORING ADMIRAL ZUMWALT SAID HE WOULD BE FORCED TO
RECOMMEND THAT THE SIXTH FLEET BE REDUCED BY ONE-HALF

WITH THE RESULTING SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. INTERESTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE MIDDLE EAST. HE STATED THAT PHASE I WAS EMINENTLY SUCCESSFUL ALTHOUGH IT WAS TOO EARLY TO HAVE DETAILED DATA TO DEMONSTRATE THIS FULLY. HE STATED THAT THE GAO REPORT DID NOT PRESENT AN ACCURATE PICTURE BECAUSE IT ATTRIBUTED COSTS TO THE HOMEPORTING OPERATION WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN EXPENSES TO THE NAVY REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT HOMEPORTING HAS BEEN INITIATED. THE MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OF THE NAVY, CHIEF WHITTAT THEN ASSURED THE COMMITTEE THAT

HOMEPORTING HAD PROVED TO BE A TREMENDOUS MORALE BOOSTER AND THAT THE HOMEPORTED ELEMENTS WERE MANNED BY NEARLY 90 PERCENT VOLUNTEERS.

2. CHAIRMAN ROSENTHAL THEN READ A PREPARED STATEMENT (BEING POUCHED SEPARATELY) WHICH CONTAINED THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

ADMIRAL ZUMWALT'S STATEMENT LARGELY IRRELEVANT AS COMMITTEE NEVER QUESTIONED HOMEPORTING AS WORLDWIDE PRINCIPLE BUT ONLY QUESTIONED THE DECISION TO HOMEPORT IN GREECE AT THIS TIME. ROSENTHAL FURTHER STATED COMMITTEE NOT INTERESTED IN MINUTIAE OF GAO REPORT AS, EVEN ACCEPTING GAO FIGURES, HOMEPORTING COST OVERRUNS ARE RELATIVELY SMALL. STATEMENT CHALLENGES SEVERAL ASPECTS OF THE TESTIMONY PROVIDED BY THE NAVY AT LAST YEAR'S HEARINGS AND CONCLUDES THAT ADDING A MAJOR AMERICAN PRESENCE WHILE THAT COUNTRY WAS UNDER ILLEGAL DICTATORSHIP WAS A FUNDAMENTAL ERROR REPRESENTING THE PREEMINENCE OF MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS OVER POLITICAL VALUES.

3. IN RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC ALLEGATIONS CONTAINED IN THE CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT AND SUBSEQUENT QUESTIONS PROPOSED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, ADMIRAL ZUMWALT MADE THE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS:

(1) ALLEGATION: NAVY PLANNING INADEQUATE BECAUSE GOG NOT CONSULTED DURING INITIAL PLANNING PHASES.

RESPONSE: GOVERNMENT OF GREECE ADVISED IN JANUARY 1972 THAT ATHENS WAS ONE OF SEVERAL SITES UNDER CONSIDERATION AS A POSSIBLE HOMEPORT FOR ELEMENTS OF SIXTH FLEET. GOG INDICATED, DURING THAT SAME MONTH, THAT IF ATHENS SELECTED BY U.S. NAVY THE REQUEST TO HOMEPORT WOULD RECEIVE FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION BY GOG. ADMIRAL ZUMWALT POINTED OUT THAT HAD NAVY UNDERTAKEN EXTENSIVE NEGOTIATIONS WITH GREEKS PRIOR TO INFORMING THE CONGRESS IN DETAIL THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT CRITICISM LEVIED AGAINST

THE NAVY. THUS, ONLY MOST SUPERFICIAL APPROACH MADE TO GREEKS UNTIL AFTER CONGRESS INFORMED OF NAVY'S PLANS.

(2) ALLEGATION: THE UNAVAILABILITY OF DESIRED ANCHORAGE SITES IN THE ATHENS AREA DIMINISHES VALUE OF ATHENS TO THE EXTENT THAT OTHER MEDITERRANEAN PORTS MIGHT BE MORE DESIRABLE AS SIXTH FLEET HOMEPORT.

RESPONSE: CONSIDERATION OF ATHENS MADE ON BASIS OF OVERALL METROPOLITAN AREA. LOCATION OF SHIPS SHORT

DISTANCE FROM THE IMMEDIATE CENTER OF THE CITY DOES NOT DETRACT FROM THE VALUE OF METROPOLITAN AREAS OF ATHENS AS A HOMEPORT. BASED ON ORIGINAL CRITERIA, ATHENS STILL MOST DESIRABLE SITE. NOTE: ADMIRAL ZUMWALT AGREED TO MAKE DETAILS OF PORT/HOUSING SURVEYS AVAILABLE TO THE COMMITTEE AND FURTHER AGREED TO PROVIDE WITNESSES TO TESTIFY ON THE SPECIFICS OF THESE SURVEYS.

(3) ALLEGATION: ELEFSIS IS AN ENCLOSED HARBOR AND DESTROYERS BERTHED IN ELEFSIS HARBOR ARE VULNERABLE.

RESPONSE: ELEFSIS HAS TWO CHANNELS, EACH AT LEAST 125 YARDS WIDE, THROUGH WHICH SHIPS OF THIS SIZE CAN PASS READILY. MANY HARBORS IN THE WORLD USED BY THE U.S. NAVY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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HAVE MUCH MORE LIMITED ACCESS TO THE OPEN SEA. THERE IS NO TACTICAL DISADVANTAGE INVOLVED IN LOCATING THE DESTROYER SQUADRON IN ELEFSIS.

(4) ALLEGATION: THERE IS A DEGRADATION OF CAPABILITY AS A RESULT OF SPLITTING THE CTG BETWEEN MEGARA AND ELEFSIS.

RESPONSE: THIS IS UNTRUE. THERE IS NO DISADVANTAGE IN THIS MINIMAL SEPARATION OF APPROXIMATELY 8-10 MILES BETWEEN CARRIER AND DESTROYERS. MANY HOMEPORTING SITUATIONS IN UNITED STATES SEPARATE ELEMENTS OF CARRIER TASK GROUP BY MUCH GREATER DISTANCES. FURTHER, IF DESTROYERS EXIT ELEFSIS THROUGH WEST CHANNEL, THEY PASS RIGHT BY THE SITE OF CARRIER ANCHORAGE AT MEGARA.

(5) ALLEGATION: PREVIOUS NAVY TESTIMONY EMPHASIZED AUSTERITY WHEN IN REALITY REQUIREMENTS EXISTED FOR DESTROYER PIER, MAJOR CARRIER BERTH, 3 MILLION DOLLAR AIRFIELD CONSTRUCTION, SERVICE CLUBS, THEATERS, COMMISSARIES, AND POST EXCHANGE.

RESPONSE: NAVY PERSONNEL HOMEPORTED IN ATHENS ARE LIVING AUSTERELY. AIR FORCE FACILITIES AVAILABLE IN

ATHENS MOST HELPFUL BUT NO QUESTION THAT NAVY PERSONNEL LIVING UNDER AUSTERE CONDITIONS AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO EVEN WITH ADDITION OF LIMITED AMOUNT OF SUPPORT FACILITIES. OPERATIONAL FACILITIES BEING KEPT TO ABSOLUTE MINIMUM AND WILL PROVIDE NEEDED SUPPORT FOR ALL OF THE SIXTH FLEET IN ADDITION TO HOMEPORTED ELEMENTS. DESTROYER PIER WILL BE USED, FOR EXAMPLE, ABOUT 55 PERCENT OF THE TIME BY NON-HOMEPORTED SHIPS.

(6) QUESTION: DESCRIBE DESTROYER PIER?

RESPONSE: GREEK ENTREPRENEUR IS CONSTRUCTING RELOCATABLE PIER AT ELEFSIS WHICH U.S. NAVY WILL LEASE. GOVERNMENT OF GREECE HAS INSISTED THAT PIER BE RELOCATABLE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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SO THAT IT MIGHT BE MOVED SHOULD THEY DESIRE TO DO SO AT SOME FUTURE DATE. PIER REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGE FOR U.S. NAVY IN TERMS OF FURTHERING THE GOALS OF HOME-PORTING AND IS BEING ACHIEVED AT MUCH LOWER COST THAN EXPECTED.

(7) ALLEGATION: ATHENS NOT NEARLY AS GOOD SELECTION AS EXPECTED. FOR EXAMPLE, INSTEAD OF NEARBY AIRFIELD, CARRIER AIRCRAFT MUST FLY HUNDREDS OF MILES TO ACCOMPLISH PROFICIENCY FLYING IN CRETE.

RESPONSE: AIRFIELD SOLUTION IS TOTALLY ADEQUATE. CARRIER AIRCRAFT OFTEN ACCOMPLISH FLIGHT TRAINING MUCH FURTHER FROM THEIR CARRIER THAN THE DISTANCE FROM ATHENS TO SOUDA BAY.

(8) ALLEGATION: NAVY COST ESTIMATES PRESENTED TO THE COMMITTEE DID NOT SHOW "TOTAL PROJECT" COSTS AS SHOWN IN THE GAO REPORT. IN ADDITION, SAVINGS THAT ACCRUE TO THE NAVY DUE TO AN INCREASE IN RETENTION RATE ARE OVER-ESTIMATED BECAUSE THESE SAVINGS WERE NOT OFFSET BY THE ADDITIONAL COSTS INCURRED DUE TO INCREASED SALARIES AND BENEFITS ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE HIGHER GRADE MORE EXPERIENCED PERSONNEL.

RESPONSE: THE NAVY'S POSITION IS THAT THE PROPER APPROACH IS NOT THE "TOTAL PROJECT" COST BUT "INCREMENTAL COST" APPROACH. THE COST ESTIMATES THAT SHO

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